



United States Department of the Interior

National Business Center

Aviation Management

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DOI AM OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES (OPM) MEMORANDUM NO. 06-02

Subject: Flight Plans and Flight Following

Effective Date: January 1, 2006

Supersedes: OPM 05-02 dated January 1, 2005

Distribution: A, B, & C

Expiration: December 31, 2006

.1 Purpose. This OPM establishes policy for aircraft flight plans and flight following and replaces policy stated in Departmental Manual 351 DM 1.4.

.2 Authority. This policy is established by the Associate Director, Department of the Interior Aviation Management (DOI AM) in accordance with Departmental Manual 350 DM 1 and Secretarial Order 3250 dated September 30, 2003.

.3 Policy.

Flight Plans. Pilots shall file and operate: a) on a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) flight plan; or, b) on an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) flight plan; or, c) in accordance with a bureau-approved flight plan program; or, d) in accordance with an DOI AM Director-approved vendor flight plan program specified in a DOI AM procurement document. Flight plans shall be filed prior to takeoff when possible.

Bureau flight plan programs may be used to accommodate specialized bureau missions and must be approved as delegated by the bureau Director. As a minimum, a bureau flight plan program must specify route of flight, estimated time of arrival (ETA), how an aircraft will be tracked during flight and response procedures should the aircraft experience a mishap or fail to check-in.

Flight Following. Pilots are responsible for flight following: a) with the FAA, or, b) with the appropriate ICAO entity, or, c) in accordance with a bureau-approved flight following program, or, d) in accordance with an DOI AM Associate Director-approved vendor flight following program specified in a DOI AM procurement document. When communication is possible, position reporting shall not exceed one-hour intervals under normal circumstances.

Bureau flight following programs must be approved as delegated by the bureau Director. As a minimum, a bureau-approved flight following program must specify actions to be taken (e.g. notify the FAA) in the event of an overdue or missing aircraft. Position reports resulting from use of a bureau-approved flight following program must be documented by the receiving office and provide enough information to enable easy location of an overdue or missing aircraft.

An aircraft is considered "overdue" when it fails to arrive within 30-minutes past the ETA and cannot be located. An aircraft is considered "missing" when it has been reported to the FAA as being "overdue" and the FAA has completed an administrative search for the aircraft without success.

/s/ Mark L. Bathrick

Associate Director